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Student Finds Niche in Community Service

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Student finds niche in community service



Monica Nelson '07 sorts clothing that has been donated to Henderson House for victims of abuse during her internship there last year. Nelson combined her interests in social work, psychology and the Spanish language for the position.

When it comes to community service, Monica Nelson's actions speak for themselves.

As a sophomore, Nelson '07 became president of SPURS honor society, a service organization involved with projects ranging from community food drives to caroling at nursing homes during the holidays. Last year she studied in Costa Rica, where she participated in a Habitat for Humanity building project. As Zeta Tau Alpha philanthropy chair, Nelson organized the Duck Derby on campus to raise money for breast cancer research and education.

"I just love to do all different types of service," Nelson said.

By the time she reached her senior year, Nelson, a sociology and Spanish major, wanted to find an internship that involved helping others and did not confine her to an office.

"I wanted to be working directly with people as much as possible," she said.

While surfing the Internet, she found Henderson House, an organization that provides services to victims of domestic and sexual abuse and maintains a shelter in McMinnville for women and children escaping abuse. Here, Nelson knew she could put her Spanish language skills to use and help people.

Nelson began working with Henderson House in the summer of 2006. She organized donations, worked at fundraisers, provided child care for the children liv-

ing in the shelter, transported clients and helped with renovations to the shelter.

"The fact that Monica is always willing to do anything to help is amazing," said Rhonda Fabreth, executive director of Henderson House. "We need more volunteers like her who are willing to lighten our load so we can focus on helping our clients."

This spring Nelson participated in the 30-hour Henderson House volunteer training, which allowed her to interact one-on-one with clients. She took part in a fundraiser organized by the Order of Omega Honor Society collecting donations at home basketball games for "A Generation of Change," which was a benefit for Henderson House.

Nelson's experiences with Henderson House have not only taught her about working for a non-profit organization, but have also affected her life.

"I have always known domestic violence is a reality, but listening to people's stories has been really personal to me," Nelson said. "It has made me all the more passionate about wanting to do something about domestic violence and work in an area of social services."

Nelson's work at Henderson House has led to an interest in psychology and social work.

"Careers with organizations like Henderson House are usually thankless," Nelson said. "But the work that they do is so necessary and important to the communities we live in."

— Laura Graham '07

Henderson House has served survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Yamhill County and surrounding counties since 1981, providing more than 35,000 shelter nights to women, men and children. For more information or to seek help, contact the following organizations.

Henderson House
www.hendersonhouse.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
www.ndvh.org/educate/index.html

Family Violence Prevention Fund
www.endabuse.org

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence <http://www.ncdsv.org>